

# **City of Austin Applicant Review Panel**

## **Mission & Purpose**

### **March 11, 2013**

**Mission & Purpose:** The Applicant Review Panel (ARP) is a temporary city body established by City Charter Article II Section 3 and made up of three independent auditors, to assist in the City's districting process by reviewing applications for the city's Independent Citizens Redistricting Commission (ICRC) and selecting the 60 most qualified applicants.

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In 2013, the ARP timeline begins on March 4 with the drawing of the ARP member names; works towards the submission of 60 applicants to Council for possible strikes by May 16; and ends on May 22 with the ARP's submission of the remaining names to the City Auditor. While the Charter does provide specific dates for ARP action, the Charter also allows for this revised schedule to accommodate the City's new November election date.

The City Auditor provides the ARP with the initial pool of ICRC applications for review. From the initial pool of ICRC applications, the ARP members must choose the most qualified 60 applicants based on the applicants':

- Relevant analytical skills
- Ability to be impartial
- Residency in various parts of the City of Austin, and
- Appreciation for the City of Austin's diverse demographics and geography

The ARP may meet as often as it wishes to complete its task and may determine the process for assessing the applications, however all ARP deliberations must be conducted in properly posted open meetings.

With the ARP's submission of remaining names to the City Auditor, the ARP's role is complete.

Note, the 14-member ICRC will be chosen from the names submitted by the ARP – the first eight ICRC members will be chosen at random, and those first eight members will choose the final six members. The Charter directs the ICRC to include a student. The Charter also states that, to the extent the city's diversity is not already reflected in this initial eight, the eight are to choose the remaining six to reflect the city's diversity, including but not limited to geographic, racial, ethnic, and gender diversity.

Austin City Code  
Article II. The Council

§ 3. REDISTRICTING.

(A) For purposes of this section, the following terms are defined: ...

(4) PANEL means the Applicant Review Panel of three qualified, independent auditors that screens applicants for the Commission.

(5) QUALIFIED INDEPENDENT AUDITOR means an auditor who is currently licensed by the Texas Board of Public Accountancy and has been a practicing independent auditor for at least five years prior to appointment to the Applicant Review Panel. ...

(I) Commission Selection Process. ...

(5) No later than March 1, 2013, and thereafter no later than October 31 in each year ending in the number zero, the City of Austin Auditor shall have reviewed and removed individuals with conflicts of interest as defined in subdivision 3(I)(3), or fail to meet the qualification prescribed in subdivision 3(D)(1), from among the commission applicants, and then shall publicize the names in the applicant pool and provide copies of their applications to the Applicant Review Panel.

(6) No later than May 1, 2013, and thereafter by January 15 in each year ending in the number one, the Applicant Review Panel shall select a pool of 60 applicants from among the qualified applicants. These persons shall be the most qualified applicants on the basis of relevant analytical skills, ability to be impartial, residency in various parts of the City, and appreciation for the City of Austin's diverse demographics and geography. The members of the Applicant Review Panel shall not communicate directly or indirectly with any elected member of the City Council, or their representatives, about any matter related to the nomination process or any applicant prior to the presentation by the panel of the pool of recommended applicants to the City Council.

(7) No later than May 2, 2013, and by January 16 in each year ending in the number one thereafter, the Applicant Review Panel shall submit its pool of 60 recommended applicants to the City Council. Each member of the City Council within five days in writing may strike up to one applicant from the pool of applicants. No reason need be given for a strike. Any applicant struck by any member of the City Council must be removed from the pool of applicants. No later than May 8, 2013, and thereafter by January 22 in each year ending in one, the Applicant Review Panel shall submit the pool of remaining applicants to the City of Austin Auditor.

**Note:**

II.3.(D)(1) Each commission member shall be a voter who has been continuously registered in the City of Austin for five or more years immediately preceding the date of his or her appointment. Each commission member, except the student member described below, shall have voted in at least three of the last five city of Austin general elections immediately preceding his or her application. One commission member shall be a student duly enrolled in a community college or university in the City of Austin and who resides and is registered to vote in the City of Austin.

II.3.(I)(9) No later than June 30, 2013, and thereafter by February 28 in each year ending in the number one, the eight commissioners shall review the remaining names in the pool of applicants and, from the remaining applicants in that pool, shall appoint six applicants to the commission. These six appointees must be approved by at least five affirmative votes among the eight commissioners. These six appointees shall be chosen to ensure that the commission reflects the diversity of the City of Austin, including, but not limited to, racial, ethnic, and gender diversity. However, it is not intended that formulas or specific ratios be applied for this purpose. Applicants shall also be chosen based on relevant analytical skills and ability to be impartial. As for geographic diversity, for the first redistricting in 2013, the eight commissioners shall appoint the remaining six members to ensure geographic diversity and that at least three commissioners come from each of the four existing Travis County Commissioners districts, to the extent feasible with the remaining six open seats. ...